

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-07 IO-13 SS-15 SP-02 L-03 H-01
NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 PRS-01 DHA-02 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01
OMB-01 /089 W
-----171833Z 043233 /41

P R 171543Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 348
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3855

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SP
SUBJECT: BASQUE ROUNDUP: TEMPER COOL SOMEWHAT

REF: MADRID 3802

1. TENSIONS IN THE FOUR BASQUE PROVINCES COOLED YESTERDAY.
ALTHOUGH THERE WAS WIDESPREAD PROTEST STRIKE ACTIVITY IDLING
TENS OF THOUSANDS OF WORKERS AND ISOLATED CONFRONTATIONS
BETWEEN POLICE AND DEMONSTRATORS TOOK PLACE, NO SERIOUS
INJURIES WERE REPORTED AND A RETURN TO RELATIVE NORMALCY
APPEARS POSSIBLE SO LONG AS NEITHER PROTESTERS NOR POLICE
MISCALCULATE AND SPARK ANOTHER CYCLE OF VIOLENCE. A NUMBER
OF BASQUE LABOR ORGANIZATIONS HAVE CALLED FOR A GENERAL
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STRIKE AGAIN ON MONDAY, MAY 23, BUT THE LEADING NON-
EXTREMIST UNIONS--COMMUNIST DOMINATED WORKERS COM-
MISSIONS, SOCIALIST UGT, AND BASQUE STV--HAVE
COUNSELED CALM AND HAVE URGED WORKERS TO AVOID ANY
ACTIONS WHICH COULD BE POLITICALLY DESTABILIZING OR
JEOPARDIZE ELECTIONS.

2. THERE ALSO HAVE BEEN CALLS FOR SYMPATHY WORK STOP-PAGES IN NON-BASQUE URBAN CENTERS, BUT THEY HAVE THUS FAR BEEN LARGELY UNSUCCESSFUL. ALTHOUGH THERE REPORT-EDLY HAS BEEN NO VIOLENCE AS A RESULT OF THE SCAT-TERED STOPPAGES WHICH HAVE RESULTED, THERE WERE VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN POLICE AND PRO-AMNESTY DEMON-STRATORS IN BARCELONA AND ZARAGOZA OVER THE WEEKEND. THE PCE HAS, PUBLICLY AT LEAST, PLAYED A MODERATING ROLE, AND HAS COME UNDER STINGING CRITISM FROM DEMONSTRATION-PROMOTING EXTREME-LEFT GROUPS FOR HAVING SOLD OUT.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, CALLS FROM DIVERSE QUARTERS FOR THE GOVT TO GRANT TOTAL AMNESTY ARE CONTINUING. DURING SEPARATE WEEKEND RALLIES, BOTH PSOE SECGEN GONZALEZ AND PCE SECGEN CARRILLO CALLED FOR SUCH ACTION. CHRIS-TIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERS RUIZ GIMENEZ AND GIL ROBLES, FOR THEIR PART, SENT A TELEGRAM TO THE KING ASKING HIM TO USE THE OCCASION OF DON JUAN'S RENUNCIATION OF HIS DYNASTIC CLAIM (MADRID 3798 AND PREVIOUS) TO GRANT THE "GENEROUS" AMNESTY REQUIRED TO STABLIZE THE BASQUE SITUATION, WHILE THE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT BASQUE NATIONALIST PARTY (PNV) ALSO CALLED ON THE KING TO "STANCH THE WOUNDS OF THE PAST WITH AN AMNESTY AS GENEROUS AS THE ONE ACCORDED BY FRANCO TO THE CIVIL WAR VICTORS." AND 65 BASQUE MAYORS (APPOINTED BY THE GOVT) REPORTEDLY HAVE DECIDED TO RESIGN IF TOTAL AMNESTY IS NOT FORTHCOMING BY MAY 24.

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4. INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA ADDRESSED THE BASQUE SITUATION AND RESPONDED INDIRECTLY TO THESE CALLS WHEN, IN ANSWERING QUESTIONS OF PORTUGUESE NEWSMEN (HE WAS IN LISBON YESTERDAY VISITING PORTUGUESE INTERIOR MINISTER COSTA BRAS), HE REPORTEDLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE SEVERITY OF THE BASQUE PROBLEM AND STATED:

--THE SPANISH REGIONS (PARTICULARLY THE BASQUE, CATALAN AND GALICIAN PROVINCES, BECAUSE OF THEIR OBVIOUS "PECULARITIES") WILL BE "INSTITUTIONALIZED;" AND

--THE GOVT HAS BEGUN TO STUDY INDIVIDUALLY THE CASES OF THOSE POLITICAL PRISONERS REMAINING INCAR-CERATED; ALTHOUGH THOSE REMAINING IN JAIL ARE RESPONSIB-LE FOR "VERY SERIOUS" CRIMES, THE PROVISIONS UNDER WHICH EACH CASE WILL BE STUDIED "ARE BROAD."

5. MARTIN VILLA INDICATED TO EMBOFF TODAY THAT TEN-SIONS HAD INDEED COOLED DOWN SOMEWHAT IN THE LAST 24 HOURS. STABLER

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Message Attributes

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